

**"Jimbo's Handy Handbook of  
Historiography"**

**THE HISTORIOGRAPHY OF THE  
UNITED STATES**

## Part I: American Historians through 1865

### General Trends

Types of Historians during this era:

1. Chroniclers and polemicists (colonial, Revolutionary, and early National periods)

--many were ministers and magistrates, such as William Bradford, and John Winthrop

--colonial-era historians were generally Puritan writers from New England who saw the history of their region as proof of God's divine sanction of their settlement in the "New World"

--history was the working out of God's will: New England assumed Biblical importance as a prototype of New Canaan

2. Self-conscious literary, narrative historians (18th and 19th centuries)

--patrician historians who were influenced by the Enlightenment and Isaac Newton, and motivated by a strong sense of social responsibility; a more secular approach to history

--often considered to be "romantic" writers

--includes George Bancroft, Francis Parkman, John Lothrop Motley, and William Hickling Prescott, Thomas Hutchinson

--romantic history explained "unique" elements that related to the life of a nation

--these scholarly amateur historians generally disappeared by 1850, as Americans began to travel to Germany and learn science, industry, and material progress influences on history from Ranke

3. Miscellaneous biographers, editors, compilers, local and state chroniclers (19th century)

--before the Civil War, it was difficult for American historians to write for the country as a whole

Historians of this era did not practice their craft exclusively; the lines between history, fiction, and belles lettres were not as clearly defined, as these crafts were not considered mutually exclusive.

"E pluribus unum" approach: Bancroft, Parkman, and Adams saw American history as a conflict between separatists and decentralizing forces versus unifying forces of sovereignty. As sectionalism grew, many Southerners continued to embrace the Whig interpretation of the American Revolution (as they were still orientated toward traditional English thought rather than German romanticism). They saw Revolution as a conservative movement, which did not include the original goal of independence of political centralization.

### George Bancroft (1800-1891)

Obtained Gottingen Ph.D. in 1820. Affected by German thinkers who had abandoned 18th century rationalism for 19th century passion and emotion. Believed in progress and unity of the state. Similar to Kant and Hegel, he advocated a German historical scholarship that went beyond chronology; it was a stream flowing toward a terminus ... and a stream with a pervading principle. First historian to undertake--but not to complete--a comprehensive history of US. He fashioned American history in the form of democratic mythology. From his works emanates the widely prevalent "consensus" interpretation, that the US exemplifies a successful experiment in democracy, capitalism, and nationalism during its progress. Romanticism prevails in his writing; he had great faith in mankind. Espousing anti-Calvinist philosophy, he saw God as benevolent and man as redeemable and progress as inevitable. He also had active political career--embraced Old Hickory.

Bancroft shaped understanding of colonial and Revolutionary history to satisfy prevailing 19th century needs. Like other New England writers, he portrayed American history as an unfolding missionary pilgrimage into the wilderness. Bancroft emphasized unity among people and the need for a strong national state. His faith in democracy is evidenced by his support for 19th century European revolutions. He used documents, but had little regard for their context. He originated the US cult of national innocence and progress.

Heroes included Andrew Jackson (for unifying by defeating the nullifiers) and Abraham Lincoln (for challenging secessionists). Indeed, historiography was, to him, tracing the earliest origins of Jacksonian democracy backwards. The past became a prologue to his own present. He remained a staunch Unionist during the Civil War. His "History of the United States" was popular because of its sense of Jacksonian democracy, exuberant confidence, and optimistic predictions. To Bancroft, the American Revolution was the logical result and culminations of colonists' desire for liberty--and the beginnings of a strong, unified state. It broke the strong mercantilist bonds. He fixed the blame for slavery on greedy colonial trading nations (making colonists reluctant slaveholders). He wrote this work in part because of growing sectional rift. It is less valuable as a history than as a portrait of the 19th century American intellectual currents.

### Francis Parkman (1823-1893)

Regarded by many as the finest US narrative historian: a storyteller for pleasure mixed with a scholar of "facts," Parkman illustrates the relationship between natural beauty and the moral beauty of heroism. In "France and England in North America," he argues that Indians could not be heroes; he presented a tale of Anglo-Saxon superiority. White, upper-class, English-speaking males appreciated his work as a hero-building tale.

### John Lothrop Motley and William Hickling Prescott

Along with Irving, were first Americans to achieve international recognition by writing on historical subjects that did not relate to the United States. After Irving and Prescott

died in 1859, Motley became the leading US Europeanist historian, and he drifted towards German romanticism. Motley wrote as a moralist: Like Lord Acton, he believed historians should judge by absolute standards of right and wrong. Prescott was first US historian to seriously examine Spanish and Spanish-American history. Prescott emphasized elite politics, war, and diplomacy, not social or economic topics.

#### Richard Hildreth

An American polymath, he authored the first US novel that had as its central theme the evils of Southern slavery, "The Slave". He claimed the peculiar institution failed to even benefit whites. Possessed strong Federalists beliefs that left him critical of Jacksonian democracy. Like Bancroft, he frequently went to the original authorities. He rejected Bancroft's romantic fileopietism, as well as the notion that history should exemplify the workings of an omniscient Divine Providence. He believed people reacted to the pleasure/pain principle. Washington and Hamilton were his heroes, and he damned Jefferson and the French Revolution. His reputation was held in the highest regard by late 19th century scientific historians, due to his use of primary materials, his critical view of sources, and an apparent dearth of philosophy. Charles Beard, Carl Becker, and Arthur M. Schlesinger Sr., paid homage to him.

#### Washington Irving (1783-1859)

America's first professional man of letters, Irving was the premiere popular interpreter of the past at the time of his death. Wrote the "Life of George Washington". His works were disrespected by scientific historians. He often satirized contemporaries.

#### William Henry Trescot (1822-1898)

Father of US diplomatic history. He saw history as a conflict between opposing views of nationalism. With a Southern tradition, he worked for secession even as he was a member of Buchanan's cabinet.

## Part II: American Historians in Late Nineteenth Century

### General Trends

Writing generally passed into the hands of academicians who were influenced by German scholarship. No longer gentlemen of leisure, historians professionalized and attempted to become detached social scientists. Earlier literary works were suspect; historians who witnessed the professionalization took place after 1875 considered it to be an intellectual, objective, empirical revolution. By the 1870s, schools such as Johns Hopkins, Harvard, and Columbia began to offer graduate training in history and to publish scholarly monographs. AHA was founded in 1884 and the AHR began publication in 1895. At the turn of the century, historical writing was no longer viewed as a branch of literature, but instead as an academic discipline closely related to the social sciences. Institutions were placed above individuals. Communication with

colleagues often took place through the growing professional literature and monographs.

Ranke notwithstanding, the character of scientific history in the US owed more to the movement away from romanticism and toward realism, the rise of natural sciences (particularly Darwin and evolutionary biology), and desire of professionals to differentiate their craft from philosophy, literature, and social sciences by invoking their own methodology.

Trends included:

- training and research methodology placed above literary content in the narrative. This led to professionalization, growing academic self-consciousness, distance from popular historical mythology, and institutional evolution. A greater reliance was placed on the use of primary materials.

- attempts to show detachment and objectivity, rather than to write as loyal partisans

- taken to its extreme, this emphasis on positivism asserted that enough objective data, if accumulated, would reveal permanent truths and scientific laws of causation and evolution. Few American historians would subscribe to the extreme ideal, because of their pragmatic national character. Nationalism, to historians of this period (1870-1910), was generally a stabilizing force.

### The Imperial School of Early American History

The imperial school included historians such as Lawrence Henry Gipson, Herbert Levi Osgood, George Lewis Beer, Edward Channing, and Charles McLean Andrews. This school sought to correct for past patriotic partisanship by examining the American colonial and revolutionary past in the context of the larger British empire. Thus the American Revolution is viewed as an event in British colonial history. Andrews especially sought to put the "colonial" back into colonial history.

### Diplomatic History

This field predominated for modern historians until 1914, and remained important until 1939 as governments attempted to justify their actions through written sources. Critics note that this history possesses little intellectual content, and it became a casualty of the shift away from political history with the rise of social history and the Annales School. To Bloch and Febvre, diplomatic history was "histoire evenementielle." It has experienced a subtle rebirth with the study of international relations and foreign policy analysis.

### Henry Adams (1838-1919)

America's most elusive historian, great-grandson of John Adams, grandson of John Quincy Adams, and son of Charles Francis Adams. He helped to fashion and define school of scientific history, and was among America's first and best medievalists. He founded the first graduate seminar in history in the US and advocated the Teutonic germ theory. His brother, Brooks, was also an historian. They joined others in New England aristocracy in sharing anti-Semitic beliefs. To him, history was social

development along the lines of weakest resistance. History suggested facts but did not mandate meaning as he became intoxicated with imagery. His propensity for mystification occurred because he was unwilling to appear decisive. He feared that attaining success would limit achievement. God, who played a providential role for Bancroft and others was absent from his pages.

#### Herbert Baxter Adams (1850-1901)

His name is synonymous with the creation of the modern American historical profession. At Johns Hopkins (1876-1901), he became identified with the "New Historical School" that applied German systematic approaches to American sources. In his seminars, he trained men such as Woodrow Wilson, Frederick Jackson Turner, and Charles M. Andrews. Adams was a founder of AHA, after getting a doctorate from Heidelberg University. Racialism--and especially a belief in Aryan supremacy--were cornerstones of his education. He emphasized institutional history in his seminars. He sought to link early New England history with Germanic Teutonism via the "germ theory." Adams, however, did not limit his students to this topic, as he also encouraged them to investigate intellectual and diplomatic history, as well as regional studies of the South and the West.

#### Charles McLean Andrews (1863-1943)

Andrews's career coincided with the rise of professional history in the United States. Attended JHU under the tutelage of Herbert Baxter Adams, and was the foremost spokesman for and founder of the imperial school of early American history. To Andrews, Britain viewed North American colonies as commercial expansion on a new frontier. A major theme: colonial assemblies were centers of power the British could not control, but they DID NOT come from Teutonic roots in premedieval Germany. In all of his works on the colonies, he explains which British institutions were important to the colonies and how they worked. He refused to view history as a story of progress. He saw history as a science composed of the raw materials of "facts" that should stay out of the hands of propagandists. The proper way to study American history was in an international context. Gipson was one of his students.

#### Hubert Howe Bancroft (1832-1918)

First historian to produce a comprehensive account of American Far West, and also included the Borderlands in his analysis. He recognized the significance of the non-Anglo West before Herbert E. Bolton and other 20th century Borderlands scholars.

#### John Spencer Bassett (1867-1928)

Biographer of Andrew Jackson, Bassett numbered among the first generation of professionally-trained "scientific historians" who revolutionized inquiry in the South. A southerner by birth, he returned to the region and was disturbed by the financial and intellectual poverty of the South. By the turn of the century, he sought to attack provincialism, political intolerance, and racial

exploitation through the publication of the "South Atlantic Quarterly." By 1903, he found himself in a North Carolina academic freedom controversy.

John W. Burgess (1844-1931)

A leader in the professionalization of American social science and pioneer in US graduate education, Burgess laid the basis of political science as an accepted discipline in the US. He offered thorough studies of comparative and American constitutional law. He championed the method of the comparative approach.

Edward Channing (1856-1931)

Channing was the last of the historians (like Bancroft) to attempt to write a complete history of the United States. A student of Henry Adams at Harvard, he believed American history was marked by evolutionary development. To him, "the most important single fact" was "the victory of the forces of union over those of particularism." He joined others in the "imperial school."

W. E. B. DuBois (1868-1963)

He became an activist for the furthering of African Americans and their proper place in history. He criticized Booker T. Washington's accommodationism. He edited the NAACP's Crisis for 25 years. In this journal, he started as a critic of social racism, later turned his back on white liberals and instead embraced socialism and Pan-Africanism, and--after the Depression began--he advocated protorevolutionary tactics like boycotts.

William A. Dunning (1857-1922)

Dunning was among the first generation of professionally trained historians. He was a student and taught at Columbia, where he encountered the new scientific methodology and Social Darwinism that placed Anglo-Saxons above all others on the social hierarchy. Imperialism and expansionism in the 1890s reinforced a sense of Anglo-Saxon superiority, and Dunning--as an anti-imperialist--believed non-whites were inferior in their interactions with American leaders.

To Dunning, history (and thereby political science) could best be studied in an objective, impersonal manner. He became an authority on Reconstruction, as he overcorrected the Northeastern bias previously found in historiography. After H.B. Adams death, the center for the study of Southern history shifted from Johns Hopkins to Dunning's office at Columbia for the first 2 decades of the 20th century. His students reflected his racist biases, but also his attention to detailed research of previously unexplored primary sources. The Dunning School portrayed Reconstruction as a period ripe with Negro inferiority and sympathized with Southern white supremacists over the "dishonest" Radical Republicans. These works were most critical of Radical plans for Negro suffrage. The Dunning School was attacked by DuBois and Beard, but few others until after World War II.

Douglas Southall Freeman (1886-1953)

Virginian Freeman was an author of Confederate military

history. Earning his JHU doctorate at a young age, this nationalist felt that the national good emerged from the Civil War (a unified nation, rather than a confederation, existed after the war ended). He wrote "Lee's Lieutenants" during World War II; Commager admired his works. T. Harry Williams, a critic of Freeman, argues that he--like Robert E. Lee--adhered to the tournament concept of war, over-emphasized Virginia at the expense of the western theatre of battle, and amounted to a Virginia gentleman writing about Virginia gentlemen. Freeman lacked a critical distance from Lee in his biographical writings.

#### Lawrence Henry Gipson (1880-1971)

Gipson was the greatest of colonial-era historians in the Imperial School. To him, London was always the center. He concentrated on economic, military, and political aspects rather than social or intellectual trends. He studied under Charles M. Andrews. Gipson was the last great Imperial scholar of the American Revolution.

#### Albert Bushnell Hart (1854-1943)

Attended Harvard with fellow ardent-Republican Teddy Roosevelt. He believed political history was the most important subfield because this was the area where America had made its greatest contribution to the world. He saw history as a science, believing a historian has a duty to find the origin of institutions and to trace institutional development. Seeing historical research as the accumulation of data, Hart saw judgment as an essential skill: one had to choose from the constellation of available data, and such a selection required careful judgment. Realizing the importance (and relative paucity) of primary source materials, he joined Harvard colleague Edward Channing in editing the "American History Leaflets" between 1891 and 1902. He saw history as a progression of developments. He wrote public as well as collegiate texts. He opposed imperialism, seeing it as a perversion of American democracy. While his tone was deeply patriotic, he did not put as much emphasis on military history as many of his colleagues.

#### J. Franklin Jameson (1859-1937)

His "The American Revolution Considered as a Social Movement" argued that social changes--as well as those institutional ones recorded by the Imperial School--tempered the American Revolution. He saw the importance of interrelations among human activities. He was an organizer of the American historical profession, editing the "American Historical Review" during its early years, advocating for the creation of a National Archives, and chair of the committee that assembled the "Dictionary of American Biography" (1936). His interest in blacks led him to assist Carter G. Woodson in finding funding for the "Journal of Negro History." He received the first Ph.D. in historical studies awarded at Johns Hopkins.

#### Henry Cabot Lodge (1850-1924)

A prominent Republican politician for many years, Lodge was also one of America's first professionally trained historians. He



was a student of Henry Adams, and his work always carried a strong political tone. He took his methodology from Adams but his purpose from Parkman and others who saw history as the special preserve of aristocratic Bostonians. At a time when Massachusetts encountered massive industrialism and immigration, Lodge harkened back to earlier Federalist days and searched for elements of New England's special character. Like romantic historians and Henry Adams, Lodge interpreted American history as the growth and advance of the national principle. To Lodge, the Civil War had called in question the long historiographical tradition Jeffersonian democracy and states' rights. Resurrecting Hamilton, Lodge believed America's political success was due to inherent conservatism of its people and institutions. Such aristocratic history had a limited audience, however. Lodge saw history as a means of teaching political wisdom.

John Bach McMaster (1852-1932)

McMaster believed people--not merely institutions or wars--were the proper subject for history. An ardent nationalist, he wanted a comprehensive history of the US. He became the first major American historian to express deep concern for the common people. He saw the expansion of the US at the end of the 19th century as consistent with American tradition. His work reflected a passion for social history, rather than a tale of "great men."

Alfred Thayer Mahan (1840-1914)

Mahan wrote on the influence of sea power on history from the mid-1600s to the Napoleonic Wars. His work was praised by American imperialist historians such as Teddy Roosevelt and Henry Cabot Lodge. In reality, he was an aloof and unpopular officer who detested life at sea.

James C. Malin (1893-1979)

A grasslands historian, Malin was an earlier scholar of ecology. He differed from subjective relativists (i.e., Beard and Becker) because he believed history should represent the past as it actually happened, based on objective reality and Truth itself. He denied that history should direct present or future affairs; it had no immediate pragmatic value.

Herbert Levi Osgood (1855-1918)

Osgood pioneered a dispassionate, comparatist approach that focused on processes of change in Anglo-American political and economic institutions. He replaced the drama, heroes, and villains with a realistic account. He focused on colonial history.

Ulrich B. Phillips (1877-1934)

See Progressive Historians.

James G. Randall (1881-1953)

Randall served as a biographer of Lincoln and a historian of the Civil War. He examined administrative and constitutional questions with a dedication to attaining objectivity. His writings canonized Lincoln.

### James Ford Rhodes (1848-1927)

Prominent historian from mid-1890s until World War I, Rhodes wrote a massive history of his times, rather than of a distant earlier period. An important social and intellectual historian, Rhodes was a part of the "nationalist school" of Civil War historiography. By the 1890s, there was a move towards sectional reconciliation and Rhodes wanted to be fair to both the North and the South. He saw slavery as the single cause of the war, denying the importance of states' rights. But, he saw slavery as a tragedy of the South, NOT its crime. He portrayed Reconstruction as an irresponsible experiment as a vengeful North tried to Africanize the South through a reign of "black terror." Like Dunning and John Burgess who followed him, Rhodes believed the "scientific racism" of the late 19th century that claimed blacks had an arrested mental development in adulthood. Common with his contemporaries, Rhodes accepted prevailing beliefs about race, nationalism, and progress.

### Theodore Roosevelt (1858-1919)

Roosevelt started out as a writer who professed condescension towards non-Anglo-Saxons, a Federalist-Whig who nevertheless claimed a belief in the common man's reliability. His works reflect a passionate interest in the individual instead of amorphous movements and a true knack for social history. Francis Parkman was his master: It was reflected as he compared the spread of Americans across the US and English-speaking peoples throughout the world with Germanic migrations; Indians thus were considered savages. He often wrote of the trans-Appalachian West. He quarrelled with Woodrow Wilson and criticized drab, pedantic history. He promoted history with flair.

### Carl Sandburg (1878-1967)

Profound biographer of Abraham Lincoln, Sandburg read Tarbell's account that credited Lincoln's greatness to his frontier environment. By the 1930s, his socialist views were replaced with support for New Deal programs. With errors in his works, he witnessed the growing gulf between amateur and professional historians.

### Ida M. Tarbell (1857-1944)

A muckraker, Tarbell blew the cover on the Standard Oil company in her 1904 book. She not only recorded history--she also helped to shape it. She saw the threat of big business to democracy. She moved from muckraking to examining the "Woman Question." An antisuffragist and a gradualist, Tarbell felt that the struggle for franchise for women might pose a revolutionary threat; she sought a stable society. In her older years, she believed businesses had reformed, and as a pioneer business historian, she distrusted FDR's experimentations during the New Deal.

### William P. Trent (1862-1939)

Trent was a pioneer of Southern history during the late 19th century. A student and admirer of Herbert Baxter Adams and the Baltimore school, he came to University of the South at a time when

Southern historical scholarship was in its infancy. He helped usher the New South into existence; and saw a definite break between the Old (reactionary) South and the New (progressive) South. By 1900, he abandoned history for literary scholarship.

#### Frederick Jackson Turner (1861-1931)

After A.B. and A.M. degrees at Wisconsin, he pursued a Ph.D. at Johns Hopkins. Rankean facts, statistics, and footnotes were the lifeblood of Herbert Baxter Adams's and Richard T. Ely's JHU students such as Woodrow Wilson, Charles Homer Haskins, Charles McLean Andrews, and Turner. He taught at Wisconsin and Harvard. Turner failed to precisely define the term 'frontier' (sometimes it was described in geographic terms, at other times as a state of being). To Turner, European influences on North American institutions were overshadowed by the local environment: The environment--NOT New England, the South, slavery, race, great men, or moral issues--that had shaped American history. He hated snobbish New England intellectuals. Free land, to him, provided the soil of American democracy by acting as a "safety valve." His ideas appealed to Americans who longed for a simpler present during the depression and industrial corporatism of the 1890s.

A geographical determinist, he believed that competing sections explained the conflict in American history. History provided national pride, as he had little care for the "shame" of American history or the importance of urban history. He did, however, pioneer new methodologies (especially with maps and statistics) and believed historians should use whatever materials they have available. He encouraged his students to look for topics beyond New England or the Southern seaboard. "The Significance of the Frontier in American History" (1893) rejected the germ theory of his teacher, Herbert Baxter Adams. He accepted multiple causation and was not a determinist. Turner also wrote diplomatic history.

#### George Washington Williams (1849-1891)

Considered the first serious black historian of the United States, Williams combined the gentleman-scholar romanticism of his era with a premonition of scientific history. He wrestled with the need to show detached scholarly objectivity while hoping to improve the station of his black compatriots. He was generally successful, however, at avoiding the pitfall of using history to prove a point. A "black Bancroft," his works resembled Bancroft's florid and subjective writing.

#### Woodrow Wilson (1856-1924)

Although Wilson did not attain stature as a major historian of his era, he did contribute to historiography in 6 ways: 1. He was one of the first historians to view sectionalism as a movement involving all regions, not just the North versus the South. 2. He was the first southerner to write an objective history of the sectional crisis (to him, US became a nation after the Civil War). 3. He was the first southerner since the Civil War to produce a general history of the US. 4. He was one of the first "public" historians in that he applied his knowledge to problems in

government and administration. 5. He reacted against scientific history by arguing that great history must be read, and therefore he wrote stylish essays. 6. He played an important role in defining the educational curriculum of history at an early stage in the profession. He participated in H.B. Adams's seminar at JHU and both taught and presided at Princeton University. Wilson had an enduring friendship with Frederick Jackson Turner. Wilson moved easily between history and political science, and contributed to both disciplines. Professional historians have criticized his lack of research and a writing style heavy on impressions rather than concepts. But, he did write history that people paid to read.

### Part III: Progressive and "New" History (1910-1945)

#### General Trends

Includes Turner, Robinson, Beard, and Becker, as well as other historians who were affected by the reform movements that began to sweep across the land in the late 19th century. Progressives saw history in subjective terms, as an ideological weapon that not only explains the past, but also might control the future. Progress, change, and democracy were important themes. These historians generally hailed from the Midwest and the South, rather than New England. To them, American history encompassed more than a transplanted English and European civilization: it had special characteristics that distinguished it from its roots. Nationalism provided a dynamic force. Rather than seeing history as an abstract discipline, they considered history a valuable tool in the construction of a better world. American history, to them, became a struggle between those committed to democratic ideals and those committed to a static conservatism. Turner, Parrington, and Beard believed materialistic forces determined ideology, and they sided with the forces of reform and democracy.

Disciples of "New History" during the 1920s and 1930s hoped to break down supposedly artificial compartments by integrating thought and deed. They were pragmatic and emphasized environmental contexts, while at the same time anti-formalist. Includes an activist temper due to its direct, continual interchange between ideas and interests, fell out of fashion by 1940s.

#### Rise of Intellectual History

The state of mind and the acceptability of beliefs are of primary interest to this discipline. The broadest activity undertaken in this sub-field is to explain the spirit of an age. During the 19th century, intellectual history served as a substitute for philosophy. Practitioners at that time cared little about methodological questions. After World War I, these amateurs gave way to professionals within specific disciplines. Positivism and a requirement of detached scientific objectivity had to wane before this "New History," which included intellectual history, could ascend. This field tended to squeeze all ideas into a matrix of events and institutions.

### Labor History

Liberals have generally assumed the lead in this sub-field. Institutional histories were largely replaced with social histories by the 1950s and beyond.

### Rise of American Studies

Just as New Historians sought to get past history as past politics, American Studies perpetuated a loose, indefinite conception of intellectual history that arose from the revolt against formalism. However, American Studies grew out of a humanistic, literary emphasis the social science New historians such as Beard did not support.

### James Truslow Adams (1878-1949)

Adams, a businessman turned scholar, wrote interpretative histories. After returning from World War I, he attempted to correct hagiographic writings of 19th century historians of New England. He concluded that Puritans did indeed have some selfish motives, and went overboard in his criticism, claiming Puritans were mercenary, undemocratic, and bloodthirsty. In later years, he became critical of FDR and the New Deal, and he used his writing to elevate Jefferson as the greatest liberal and thereby a standard FDR would never meet.

### Howard K. Beale (1899-1959)

Beale, a revisionist leader who worked to rehabilitate the Reconstruction administration of Andrew Johnson, was a close friend of Beard who favored economic interpretations of history. He was a social crusader for academic freedom, peace, freedom, and civil rights. He was a member of the ACLU, NEA, American Federation of Teachers, and NAACP. Beale contended that Radical Republicans replaced conciliation with subjugation under Thaddeus Stevens and Charles Sumner, then looked deeper at the unspoken economic motives of Radical Republicans against Southerners. He taught Woodward and Tindall. When Morison and other historians differed with Beard's economic interpretations and viewed wars as noble crusades, Beale rose to Beard's defense.

### Charles A. Beard (1874-1948)

Beard wrote in four broad areas of US history: 1. economic interpretation of American history; 2. urban planning and reform; 3. philosophy of history; and 4. foreign affairs. At Columbia, he joined James Harvey Robinson as a leading proponent of "New history." Despite his emphasis on economic conditions, Beard rejected that economics provided the sole determinant in history.

"An Economic Interpretation of the Constitution of the United States" (1913) brought Beard national attention. He rejected Bancroft's notion of divine guidance, Teutonic emphasis on the genius of certain races, and idealistic belief that the Constitution represented the "spirit of the people." He pioneered collective biography, or prosopography, for the first time to examine an historic problem. He surveyed the economic interests of convention members and argued that the Constitution was created by mercantilists and manufacturers who specific commercial

interests. While scholars after World War II have criticized him, he did successfully reorient scholarship. It liberated the next generation of historians by knocking leaders from their pedestal. Beard never accepted Turner's frontier thesis. While a sense of technological utopianism appeared in his works during the 1920s, the Depression quashed his faith in science and technology guaranteeing ultimate progress. Over time, his initial support of FDR's New Deal programs waned as he feared that Roosevelt's foreign policies might cause us to engage in war. He supported isolationist causes and wrote critical accounts of FDR.

Beard co-authored some works with wife Mary Beard. The conflicts of interest found in the Constitution were built upon in their "Rise of American Civilization," where Revolutionary conflicts built up to a climax during the Civil War (Hamiltonian northerners versus Jeffersonian southerners in a Second American Revolution that led to the consolidation and triumph of Northern capitalism). Beard wanted to make government more responsive to the popular will and to improve public administration.

Beard often stressed the political nature of history and the "public responsibility" of historians, and hoped his profession would see their culture progressing toward a more ideal order. To Beard, "New History" aimed not only at broadening the scope of historical study beyond past politics, but also at using knowledge of the past as a way to both illuminate present problems and shape the future. Beard's works often led to calls for systematic reform. He rejected "causality" and absolute faith in "facts" found in the scientific school for a belief in historical relativism. While neoconservative historians challenged his Hamilton-Jefferson dichotomy as simplistic, Beard was revived by New Left historians of the 1960s who also wanted a history coupled with activism.

#### Carl L. Becker (1873-1945)

A student of Turner, Charles Homer Haskins, and James Harvey Robinson, Becker delved into both European and American history. Coining the idea that "everyman was his own historian," Becker exemplified the progressive triumph of historical relativism. At Wisconsin, he came under the influence of Turner, who taught him that each age rewrote history to suit its own needs. He cared less for the record of events than for the state of mind that conditioned the events. He learned from James Harvey Robinson and Herbert Levi Osgood at Columbia. He taught for many years at Cornell. Like Robinson and other "New Historians," Becker believed history should be useful. To him, historians could never obtain a total mental detachment from the subjects they studied. Becker's themes had longstanding importance. For example, the Becker Thesis argued that the American Revolution was as much an internal class struggle as a contest for independence from the home country. This dual revolution thesis captured the Progressive spirit.

#### Herbert Eugene Bolton (1870-1953)

A student of Turner, Bolton discovered his own frontier: the Spanish-American borderlands. Bolton wanted to dramatize the Spanish presence in North America just as Francis Parkman had for

the French. The history of the United States was more to him than the advance of Anglo culture. The Bolton Thesis (though he DID NOT say it): the Americas have a common history. He joins Turner and Walter Prescott Webb as a premiere historian of the American frontier.

John R. Commons (1862-1945)

Commons believed that the study of economics must be related to the cultural and institutional context of the nation. As a non-Marxist admirer of corporate capitalism, he did share racial prejudices and Protestant ethnocentrism of his contemporaries. He founded the "Wisconsin School" of labor history.

William E. Dodd (1869-1940)

A historian of the South, Dodd sought to challenge the Northeastern-Federalist-Whig perspective of American history with writings from the Southern and Western, Jeffersonian and Jacksonian persuasion. He attacked scientific historians for their unwillingness to discuss what was not readily documented. He joined Turner, Beard, and Parrington as a believer in New History. He argued that the conservatism of wealthy Southern planters had subverted the region's democratic heritage. As a path-breaking analyst, Dodd brought Southern history beyond apologetics to critical examination.

Merrill Jensen (1905-1980)

Jensen's scholarly career emanated from the University of Wisconsin and focused on the American Revolution. He argued that internal conflicts for economic interest shaped many events, and that the Revolution promoted internal democracy. To him, the Articles of Confederation expressed the essence of the Revolution (the unleashing of democracy and the eliminations of a central imperial government), while the Constitution's creation marked a conservative counterrevolution. Often called the last of the progressive historians and neglected by consensus historians, his work on internal conflict again gained prominence in the 1960s and 1970s.

Vernon L. Parrington (1871-1929)

Parrington's "Main Currents in American Thought" (1927) portrayed American history as a debate between Jefferson's decentralized agrarian democracy and Hamilton's privileged propertied minority. He, in essence, was a latter-day Jeffersonian bewildered at the loss of an agrarian Eden, while Beard saw the triumph of industrial capitalism as inevitable and a force for long-term progress. His work is melodramatic and it overestimates European (especially French) influences on American thought. It offered a study of American thought as created through literature, with an emphasis on continuing struggle: Puritan theocracy (John Winthrop)/tolerant liberalism (Roger Williams). The (liberal) main currents were, according to Parrington, impeded by conservative forces. This simplistic and ahistorical perspective has actors change while the never-ending struggle remains.

### Ulrich B. Phillips

Phillips transformed into a progressive historian after encountering Frederick Jackson Turner. Although a white supremacist and racist, Phillips did not write his books on behalf of that ideology; they instead assumed it. He had a dominating influence on Southern historiography in the first half of the 20th century. As a student at Columbia, he studied under Dunning (who had broke with other Civil War scholars by reexamining the Southern point of view). Phillips did not share Dunning's interest in Reconstruction, politics, or constitutional developments, as much as Turner's emphasis on New History. Like Turner, Phillips used maps and charts and discussed the importance of climate and geography on history. He proffered a Southern version of the frontier thesis, with the exception that the Southern frontier did not produce urbanization or industrialization as did that of the West; instead, the proliferation of staple crops led to plantation slavery and a slave aristocracy. A central theme is the pervasive negative impact of slavery on ideas, institutions, and the economic development of the South.

Phillips believed that historians generally neglected or misrepresented the South, and he argued that only Southerners trained in scientific method and acquainted with regional customs could offer a proper portrait. While praising planter class values, he regretted social, economic, and political outcomes of slavery. He had little positive to say about the Old South, its states' rights tradition, or the South's reactionary politics between 1830 and 1860. He joined Woodrow Wilson and William E. Dodd as a member of the New South school: These writers blamed feudal nature of slavery for the South's ills. "American Negro Slavery" and "Life and Labor in the Old South" documented the capitalistic nature of plantations and claimed paternal oversight of "childlike" slaves was necessary. He argued that the slave system generally was unprofitable. While his studies of slavery were based on detailed research in plantation records, he had conservative attitudes.

To Phillips, white supremacy was the central theme of Southern history. Few of his contemporaries, with the exception of Carter Woodson and W. E. B. Du Bois, outwardly criticized him; his reputation declined after his death, and especially after World War II. Scholars during the civil rights era looked backward towards the antebellum era for examples of resistance to the paternalism that Phillips emphasizes. Kenneth Stampp's "Peculiar Institution" overturned his work in 1956, but Marxist Genovese has cautiously paid tribute to Phillip's work, viewing him as a founder of modern Southern history.

### James Harvey Robinson (1863-1936)

Robinson advocated "New History" and challenged scientific history. He sought to broaden the scope of history to cover the full range of mankind's experiences, not just wars, politics, and institutions. He preferred the dynamic rather than the static. He saw history as an instrument for social progress. He was largely a Europeanist. He crusaded for enlightenment through the study of history. After participating in the Rankean professionalization of



history, he was a leader in the second revolution that sought to expand history with the aid of allied social sciences, calling for their inclusion as early as 1892. He began to argue that Leopold von Ranke's dictum of "how it really happened" should be changed to "how it came about." By 1904, he shifted to a presentist view of the function of history, that materials should be considered for their usefulness in understanding present problems instead of the importance they had at the time or their value in furthering our knowledge of their time. "New History" (1912) was his written manifesto.

Arthur Meier Schlesinger, Jr. (1917- )

Schlesinger believes an intellectual has the responsibility to participate fully in political life (he was a founder of Americans for Democratic Action in the late 1940s). A democratic liberal centrist, he has received attacks from both the left and the right. His father was an innovative social and cultural historian at Harvard, while his mother wrote pioneering studies in women's history. Like his parents, Schlesinger Jr. believed that liberalism properly belonged in the Democratic party, and he espoused an anti-Communist philosophy at a time when Marxism became quite fashionable. He served with the OWI and OSS during World War II. In the late 1940s, he supported Truman's containment policy. After JFK's victory, he resigned his Harvard position to work as the administration's contact with liberals and cultural entities.

His first book, "Orestes Brownson: A Pilgrim's Progress," came out when he was 22 years old. A prolific writer, he also was a highly visible political activist and advisor to prominent politicians. His writings focused on reform activities of progressive presidents from Andrew Jackson to the present. His "Age of Roosevelt" offered a favorable account of the New Deal. He views the mainstream liberal agenda as the 'vital center.' His "Age of Jackson" (1945) rejected the Turnerian notion that Jacksonian Democracy emanated from the frontier (sectionalism), but instead from classes (workers in the East supported the program). Some critics saw this work as a contemporary justification for FDR's New Deal. During the 1950s, the growth of consensus scholarship downplayed class/ideological differences between Democrats and Whigs.

"The Vital Center: The Politics of Freedom" (1949) defined the stand of an anti-Communist liberal. During this period, Schlesinger grew fond of Niebuhr's writings. His vital center posture--augmented by the influence of consensus historians that would cause his later writings to downplay the class struggles appearing in his "Age of Jackson"--placed him at odds with the Old Left (Herbert Aptheker), New Left (Jesse Lemisch), and conservatives (William Buckley, Clare Booth Luce). Disappointed by the intellectual sterility represented by the 1950s culture, Schlesinger nevertheless wrote his "Age of Roosevelt" series during this time, a series that celebrated FDR and the New Deal while some segments of popular culture viewed "relief, recovery, and reform" as nothing more than "creeping socialism." To him, Roosevelt represented the vital center who saved capitalism from itself.

After Jack Kennedy's assassination, he reviewed his notes and

wrote "A Thousand Days: John F. Kennedy in the White House." Schlesinger did get some criticism from intellectuals who did not believe Kennedy was one of them (style over substance in Camelot), while New Left historians viewed JFK in an ever dimmer light, as a Cold Warrior who led us into Vietnam and set the stage for Americanization of the war during LBJ's term. His "The Bitter Heritage: Vietnam and American Democracy, 1941-1966" gave him a forum to criticize Johnson's foreign policy and to argue that had Kennedy lived, American involvement would have been limited. Schlesinger represented the middle of the road that failed to appease either the hawks or the doves. He took issue with New Left authors who blamed anti-Communist liberals such as him for not having a strong resolve to challenge the Cold War culture during the 1940s and 1950s. After an assassin's bullet killed close friend Robert Kennedy, Schlesinger had an even gloomier view. Unlike his "Politics of Hope" that placed Schlesinger's liberalism in a position of victory over conservatism, his "The Crisis of Confidence: Ideas, Power, and Violence in America" (1969) rebutted against strong attacks by New Left intellectuals such as Noam Chomsky and Herbert Marcuse. "The Imperial Presidency" (1973) appeared as Watergate was on the minds of many Americans. In evaluating foreign policy, Schlesinger levelled his greatest criticism at Johnson and Nixon. During the 1970s, Schlesinger often wrote about current political matters.

#### Kenneth Stampp (1912- )

Stampp came of age during the period of New Deal liberalism. His social and political narratives emphasize the democratic experience by looking at sectional conflict and the collapse of the democratic process, harsh nature of Southern slavery, and the convergence of idealism and self-interest during Reconstruction. His "Peculiar Institution" shattered Phillips's portrait of paternal benevolence. While Phillips had automatically assumed white superiority, he failed to fully understand the social and cultural dimensions of slave life as Stampp did. As Phillips argued that slavery educated and Christianized slaves, Stampp replied that the bonds of servitude obliterated strong African cultural roots. He hoped future studies would add to the literature, and maintained a debate with Genovese, who supported Phillips's economic interpretation over Stampp's. When Fogel and Engerman wrote "Time on the Cross" as a cliometric criticism of Stampp, he replied that their narrative had dehumanized slaves by turning them into statistical abstractions. His "Era of Reconstruction" criticized the often-told tragic legend by Southern apologists such as Dunning (blacks were incapable of co-existing with whites in an equal society and racial discord would not have occurred if the white South could have reconstructed itself). Stampp dismantled these legends by refuting Dunning's interpretation.

#### Walter Prescott Webb (1888-1963)

A Texan by birth, Webb wrote large dramatic syntheses rather than small focused monographs. He preferred storytelling over performing empirical research. Asserting that history could prompt social change, he argued that the West and South had suffered due

to Northern interests. An environmental historian, Webb believed that geography, economics, and regionalisms intersected with history.

Max Weber (1864-1920)

An influential social scientist and renaissance man, he saw history and sociology as inseparable entities. To him, sociology is a higher-level, theoretically informed history.

Bell Irvin Wiley (1906-1980)

A student of U. B. Phillips at Yale, Wiley went on to write "Johnny Reb" and "Billy Yank" to move military history of the Civil War away from battles and great generals to the largely ignored ordinary lives of soldiers. Wiley worked with James Silver and others to desegregate the Southern Historical Association. He abhorred white supremacists.

T. Harry Williams (1909-1979)

A long-time scholar at Louisiana State, Williams had a "conflict" approach to the Civil War that emphasized differences between pragmatic, cautious Lincoln and his radical counterparts in the Republican party. Consensus historians generally downplayed differences between Lincoln and fellow Republicans. To Williams, the Civil War was the first 'modern' war, Lincoln the great leader, and Grant a better general than Lee. Through his research and over 300 oral history interviews, Williams in "Huey Long: A Biography" credited Long as a sharp politician, not a buffoon.

Carter G. Woodson (1875-1954)

Through both research and publication, Woodson spent his life proving that African Americans DO indeed have a valuable history. He answered Edward Channings's assertion that blacks did not have a history. By using US census data, Woodson argued that better educational opportunities for blacks would improve race relations in America. Seeing racism as the nation's greatest problem, he hoped the "Journal of Negro History" and the "Negro History Bulletin" would further research in African American history. He set the groundwork that John Hope Franklin and others would build upon.

## Part IV: The Annales School and Total History

General Trends

This body of scholars, confined largely to France during its early years, emphasizes the "long duration" rather than narrative chronological history. Founded by Lucien Febvre and Marc Bloch in 1929, the Annales School was propagated largely by Fernand Braudel and his temporalities (long, intermediate, and short durations). A 'new' Annales School appeared after 1968, with an emphasis on studying small, marginal groups and not their relationship to the broader culture. A weakness, pointed out especially by Marxists,

is a lack of a satisfactory theory of change.

The wedding of anthropology and history emanated, in part, from the Annales School. Social anthropology examines the history of small communities, and has benefited from the recent resurgence in pioneering studies in local, family, and sexual historiography.

## Part V: Consensus Historians (Neo-conservatives)

### General Trends

Beginning in the 1930s--and especially after World War II--historians began to question the Progressives's optimistic belief in progress. The rise of Nazism and global Communism shook the faith of many scholars. These neoconservatives, led by Daniel Boorstin, reexamined history in terms of consensus and continuity instead of conflict and change. Criticism of American society was replaced with narratives that emphasized American achievements. The rise of Western Civilization courses was one result, and historians like Boorstin ("The Genius of American Politics") preached that America's special nature led to an "end of ideology" on its shores. Of course, "no" ideology is an ideology. Conflicts were minimized: thus Jefferson and Hamilton only differed over the means of implementing the same goals--they did not have different goals. While Progressives saw the Revolution, Civil War, New Deal, and other movements as turning points in our history, consensus authors downplayed such ideological differences.

During the Cold War, many historians assumed positions with the federal government. This relationship made it difficult for them to question American institutions at a time when loyalty against the communist menace was expected.

### Bernard Bailyn (1922- )

A historian of colonial and Revolutionary America, Bailyn seldom ventures beyond 1800 in search of subjects to research. He studied with Oscar Handlin and Samuel Eliot Morison and taught at Harvard. His work exudes openness to a broad array of influences and methodologies, including quantitative techniques, kinship analysis, and collective biography. He incorporates social science constructs while continuing to view the family as the primary source of cultural transmission. He examines ideas and ideologies, and views colonial merchants as important agents of social change that saw England increasingly impinge upon their dominance after 1660. To him, the Revolution was a contest of ideas rather than a social upheaval. Bailyn's works form a composite interpretation of the Revolution, from its conservative origins (rooted in ideology and the colonial political structure) to its far more radical consequences. A central theme of his is that ideas lay at the heart of American independence. Gordon Wood was one of his students.

Along with Edmund S. Morgan, Bailyn established the family as a valuable area of study in early American history. The family continued to appear as a central unit in his educational history. His "Education in the Forming of American Society" confirmed him as

a leading social historian of colonial American history. He joined a growing body of scholars after World War II who once again asserted the uniqueness of our past.

Daniel Boorstin (1914- )

Primary proponent of the consensus school, he celebrated America's past, believing that the United States's experience has promoted the development of unique institutions and peculiar democratic values. He builds upon this in his "The Americans" series. The American Revolution becomes non-revolutionary, and the Civil War barely a blip on the radar screen. For Boorstin, the key to understanding America involves a consideration of our relationship with Europe. "The Genius of American Politics" talks of the "givenness" that values in America are automatically defined in that our values are a gift from the past and the present, and our history exudes continuity. He praises the vitality of American institutions and the lack of intellectualizing over political theory. He is a proponent of American exceptionalism. A former Harvard radical of the 1930s, Boorstin had a brief fling with Marxist analysis and Communist politics.

Samuel Flagg Bemis (1891-1973)

Founder of diplomatic history, Bemis argued that a knowledge of foreign policy requires research in archives of all nations involved in an event. An employee of the US government during and after World War II, he actively supported US foreign policy. A firm anti-communist, he championed the notion of American involvement in Third World governments. His look at earlier years of American history praised the preservation of the Union and national expansion across the continent.

Thomas Cochran (1902- )

Cochran contributed to the discipline by writing on the sub-field of business history, and helping to separate it from economic history. He saw a link between business and social history, arguing that American businesses have influenced social change. With support from Merle Curti, he incorporated social science theories to make his works useful for scholar and general reader alike. In his "Frontiers of Change," he argues that industrialization in the US was firmly set before 1820 and by 1840 the nation was industrialized.

Henry Steele Commager (1902- )

During World War II, Commager served as an OWI Army historian, and throughout his career he sought to reach the widest possible audience with an optimistic and didactic story of America. His 1960s stand that individuals and minority rights were best left to the wisdom of lawmakers was naive, but in accord with his faith in the system. He saw his books as a means of creating an informed electorate that would provoke lawmakers to necessary involvement. Commager approved of the New Deal liberalism and objected to Republican opposition as a repudiation of the GOP's heritage. During the Cold War, he challenged calls for conformity by so-called proponents of "Americanism." Advocating the higher law off

transcendentalism and pluralistic pragmatism, he rejected calls to limit inquiry to a narrow perspective. His "American Mind" (1950) attempted to sketch America's character. Like Parrington, he was always a Jeffersonian liberal who put his trust in the people.

#### Oscar Handlin (1915- )

A Harvard University historian and librarian, Handlin has made pioneering contributions in ethnic, social, and urban history. He trained Bernard Bailyn, Martin Duberman, and Sam Bass Warner, among others. He co-authored books with wife Mary. In "The Uprooted," Handlin argued that to write the history of immigrants in America, one must understand that the story of immigrants constitutes American history. His "The Americans: A New History of the People of the United States," emphasized evolution of institutions over the deeds of 'Great Men'. He also had an interest in the relationship between education and social mobility. In "Truth in History" (1979), he lamented that the 1930s and 1940s historians who sought for truth and assisted one another had been replaced by partisan scholars who had politicized history. He had an especial distaste for New Left historians who he thought deliberately distorted their research to affirm preconceived ideas. Handlin was fervently anti-communist and critical of opponents to the Vietnam War.

#### Richard Hofstadter (1916-1970)

Hofstadter presented a complex portrait of certain aspects of the American experience. "Social Darwinism in American Thought: 1860-1915" (1944) analyzed the transformation of Darwin's ideas into an ideology. Hofstadter was torn between the history of ideas and political history: In his "American Political Tradition" (1948), he used biographical essays to revise the emphasis of earlier Progressive historians on conflicts between special economic interests; he emphasized areas of agreement (i.e., central faith in private property, etc.). Unlike progressive interpretations, he did not see the bulk of American history defined as a dramatic conflict between conservative property interests and liberal advocates of the 'people'. Just as Beard sought to correct for fileopietistic praise of the Constitution, Hofstadter hoped to correct for excesses in the progressive arguments. To him, American political traditions and ideologies had themselves become forces in history that could be functional at one time in history and dysfunctional in another time. As a consensus historian, he reduced conflict in history to shifting groups and coalitions rather than a continuing struggle between classes. Unlike other consensus historians, Hofstadter was a critic of the shared values. An ideal intellectual, to him, was a detached, analytical mediator who creates an ambivalent, complicated story that warns of irrational undercurrents that might assault people.

To describe Hofstadter as a consensus historian does not provide a full portrait. Hofstadter epitomized the New York cosmopolitan and intellectual between World War II and Vietnam. His scholarship was catalyzed by contemporary issues, and it incorporated the social sciences, psychology, and literary

criticism. Though he wrote on a broad spectrum of history (from the Puritans to the 1960s), unlike Beard he never attempted to provide an all-encompassing causal explanation. History was "an engagement with the present." Unlike his mentor Beard, he was never dismayed by historical relativism: he simply took it for granted and worked within its confines. He was skeptical of simple answers and final truths. Throughout Hofstadter's career at Columbia, Beard loomed as the intellectual paragon to be overthrown.

Three related areas appear in his writings between 1948 and 1968: First, his interest in the role of ideas in history led him to further explore ideology and values. "The Age of Reform" (1956) generated controversy as he brought together his interest in political and intellectual history. In this work, he shifted his attention from the ideas/political views of presidents to the ideologies and political values/assumptions of a large segment of the populace. He looked at the dynamic political forces that shaped the period from the 1890s to the New Deal (populism was tainted by illiberalism, etc.). It described how American belief in free enterprise and individualism defined and circumscribed reform strategies. America's liberal tradition was thus also a conservative tradition. He had made Populists mean and provincial. In addition, he placed greater emphasis on constructs from other disciplines, especially sociology and psychology. "The Paranoid Style in American Politics" examined contemporary politics and relied heavily upon sociology and social psychology. Like sociologist Seymour Martin Lipset, he drew a distinction between interest politics (voting by pocketbook interests during hard times) and status politics (voting by ideas and values during prosperity). Finally, he had a greater concern for the life of the mind and the position of intellectuals in American life. In "Anti-intellectualism in American Life," Hofstadter located threats not within the limitations of the academy, but in the culture as a whole. He saw the pursuit of truth as the "heart of the intellectual's business."

Hofstadter, like other intellectuals of the 1930s and 1940s, saw the consequences of Hitler's mass following. On top of this, he saw how Father Coughlin and McCarthy had also attracted large audiences, and he feared that an uninformed populace might accept easy answers. In this sense, he joined other intellectuals in the 1950s and 1960s who rejected ideologies as dangerous weapons. Theodore Adorno's "Authoritarian Personality" and Hannah Arendt's theories about mass society's vulnerability lead Hofstadter to incorporate social science theories in an attempt to prove that popular movements often have an irrational component.

Arthur S. Link (1920- )

Link represents the foremost scholar of Woodrow Wilson. Like Wilson, he believed that history taught moral values. Through his study of Southern history and his ties to the region, Link could understand the influences that shaped Wilson.

Forrest McDonald (1927- )

McDonald has demythologized early national and business

history from a conservative perspective. He challenged the notion of predatory and uncaring industries, replaced Beard's simplistic interpretation of the Constitution, and emphasized Hamilton's talents over a 'stupid' Washington and 'destructive' Jefferson. Walter Prescott Webb influenced him in the early years.

His early writings--which were in the field of business history--caused controversy. He downplayed the nobility of some reformers by characterizing them as anticorporate demagogues. He opposed the liberal view of business history because it portrays businesses as the 'bad guys', but noted that his colleagues had often reversed the demonology. He termed welfare capitalism the "corporation as father," adding that FDR's New Deal made the government a godfather of sorts to the entire populace.

McDonald's "We the People: The Economic Origins of the Constitution" (1958) bitterly attacked Beard's economic interpretation. He obliterated the Beard thesis, claiming that while economic forces played a role in the Constitution's ratification, economic life was more pluralistic than Beard had maintained. Diversity prevented the assignment of simple labels of self-interest. In "E Pluribus Unum: The Formation of the American Republic," McDonald showed his admiration of "nationalists" like Hamilton, who stressed history over logic and knew men could have evil motives over Jefferson and Adams, who espoused the natural rights of man. In other works, he downplayed Washington's role as president, instead crediting Hamilton for establishing an economic system that held the nation together. He has joined Grady McWhiney in emphasizing the vibrant Celtic culture found in the South. He portrayed the American War for Independence as a conservative battle, with Jeffersonians and Jacksonians weakening the national authority laid by Hamilton so that Civil War became inevitable. While he conceded that the New Deal attempted to save capitalism from its failings, he denied that it revived the economy. He strongly endorsed Cecil Currey's "Code Number 72."

#### Dumas Malone (1892- )

Malone excels in biographical history. He believed historians should get their facts correct, report events in the context of their subject's time (not judging by present-day standards or beliefs), and be fair (never prosecuting or defending) their subjects. He always used recorded information and avoided speculating unless concrete data was present. He worked closely with Yale mentor Allen Johnson on the "Dictionary of American Biography." He wrote extensively on the life of Jefferson, placing the Sage within his own age and not within the 20th century paradigm. Malone did not see the differences between Jefferson and Adams as fundamental. He treated Jefferson fairly, told the complete story of Jefferson's life, he made unbiased and sound value judgments AFTER telling the story of Jefferson, and he used all available resources for his biography.

#### Perry Miller (1905-1963)

Miller contributed to scholarship as an cultural and intellectual historian, as well as a literary critic. After getting his doctorate at Chicago, he taught at Harvard until his



death. Miller worked for the government during World War II, in the Office of Strategic Services. He believed an interpretation of America's past should begin with an explanation of those traditions that have made the American mind. His contributions to American intellectual life cut a broad path far beyond history and literature alone; he joined Hannah Arendt, Reinhold Niebuhr, and Richard Hofstadter in adding philosophical construct to American humanities and human nature.

He studied Puritans because he believed Puritanism became a continuous factor in American life and thought. He placed Puritanism within the larger context of western civilization, and advanced the notion that Massachusetts Puritans distinguished between church (moral authority) and state (political responsibility). Samuel Eliot Morison provided an influence in his life. While Morison and others had rehabilitated the role of Puritans since mid-1920s, Miller placed Puritan ideas in a predominant role. His "The New England Mind: The Seventeenth Century" placed Puritanism in the center of a sense of psychological and intellectual certainty: they had a cyclical theory of history built upon successive periods of corruption and redemption. After 25 years of examining the Puritan mind, Miller sought to pursue the American intellect from the mid-18th century to the Civil War. His "Life of the Mind in America: From the Revolution to the Civil War" was published posthumously, making the covenant (sense of people belonging to God) both the cause and victim of the American Revolution. He looked at how Americans strived to create a Christian commonwealth on the early national period.

#### Edmund Sears Morgan (1916- )

Educated at Harvard, Morgan spent most of his career at Brown and Yale. He joins fellow patrician scholars from Bancroft to Morison who sought to understand how early Americans created such a great nation. He humanized the Puritans. Trained by Perry Miller to believe that ideas coupled with passion could shape behavior, he represented counter-progressive historical thought. But it would be inappropriate to classify him as a doctrinaire Neo-Whig historian: He did recount the progressive nature of the development of ideas.

His "Puritan Dilemma: The Life of John Winthrop" examines how Puritans tried to do right in a wrong world in an intellectual fashion by tracing the life of Winthrop from England to Massachusetts Bay colony. He looks at the history of ideas in specific settings, rather than in abstract dimensions. His "Stamp Act Crisis: Prologue to Revolution" argued that the Stamp Act led to emergence of constitutional issues. "The Birth of the Republic, 1763-1789" described the Revolutionary Era as a period when Americans looked for guiding principles; he asserted that we should take their ideas seriously. He downplayed a progressive notion of deterministic class conflict. In "American Slavery, American Freedom," he argued that patriot leaders in Virginia espoused ideas of liberty and equality only because slavery had led to herrenvolk democracy by eliminating most of the laboring class. Republicanism thrived because of the enslavement of Africans who toiled in the

fields.

Samuel Eliot Morison (1887-1976)

Born of Bostonian aristocratic stock, Morison centered his academic career at Harvard. He admired 19th century Boston historians like Parkman, Prescott, and Motley. As an undergraduate, he worked with Hart and Turner. He viewed history as polished literary narrative that included the deeds of heroes. Yet, he believed--like von Ranke--that historians should not present preconceived conclusions or write tales of romantic fiction, and he especially warned against using history to serve some social purpose. Strong style is important. Morison loved the sea and favored biography.

He collaborated with Commager in producing "The Growth of the American Republic." While Morison would agree with Beard and Becker that true scientific objectivity is impossible, he did not feel that historians should write relativistic accounts that advocate "progress." He believed that the pacifism many Progressives espoused after World War I led to their inadequate attention to military history. Morison also found little value in Marxist determinism, Dewey's educationalist theories, or Freudian psychohistory. His 1965 edition of "The Oxford History of the American People" emphasized continuity of fundamental institutions. He remained convinced of the inherent superiority of Western Civilization over indigenous groups (i.e., Columbus's sailing acumen and "discovery" of America was a "gift" to the "savages").

Richard B. Morris (1904- )

Not truly a consensus historian, Morris sets himself between this and the progressive school. He used this versatility in his writings on the legal and economic history of early America. He believed social and environmental conditions in early America forced colonists to create a legal system that met their needs better than did the inadequate English common law; they augmented common law with biblical precepts and practical adaptations. He used his grounding in legal and labor research to seek answers to broader social and economic questions. He challenged Schlesinger (Jr.)'s Jacksonian "wage-earner" thesis by claiming that Jackson was no great friend of labor, eastern industrial workers gave ambivalent support at best to Old Hickory, and could not trace--as Schlesinger had argued--a linear progression of American liberalism from Jackson to FDR. To Morris, the American Revolution was neither a narrow conservative movement (seeking only political independence) nor a class struggle. Unlike Progressives who were critical of Hamilton or the motives for creating the Constitution, Morris saw this document as the institutional culmination of the Revolutionary dream.

Allan Nevins (1890-1971)

A prolific writer, Nevins brought history out of the ivory tower and tried to bring it into every American's life: history needs the public and the public needs history. His career as a journalist brought him into contact with the shapers of early 20th century ideas. But his love of teaching persuaded him to become a

professional historian at Columbia. He supported FDR's New Deal programs. An Anglophile prior to America's entry into World War II, Nevins saw how Nazis and Bolsheviks had corrupted history to suit their prejudices during the war. Nevins believed that democracy requires good history (based on scientific method, inductive logic, and the use of hypotheses to test conclusions, while becoming--in the end--a literary art). Nevins admired the 19th century literary historians (Prescott, Motley, Bancroft) and, while he applied the scientific method to test assumptions in his writing, he despised the way empiricists had replaced strong narratives with mechanistic theories: Such essays were of little interest to the public Nevins sought to reach.

Nevins redefined our understanding of industrial development in the United States. Traditionally considered within the progressive context of despoiling by "robber barons," he wrote about Rockefeller, Ford, and Eli Whitney with a belief that American progress since 1800 evolved in great measure from business and industry. He also sought to provide a complete discussion of events from the Mexican War through Reconstruction. Rather than adding another title in the field of military history, he emphasized political, economic, administrative, cultural, and social dimensions. Revisionist progressives often saw the Civil War as the product of uncompromising fanaticism (with Southern apologists tending to place extra blame on Northern abolitionists), and believed that the unprofitable nature of slavery would have led to its end without the war. To Nevins, war was terrible ... but also sometimes necessary (North and South could NOT work out a compromise that kept both slavery and the Union). Given that the South of the 1950s still remained a fertile ground for racism, Nevins would believe that slavery might have continued long into the 20th century unless resolved by the Civil War. Nevins contributed to the practice of oral history by--as any good journalist--interviewing his contemporaries and saving their interviews for future use. He began the Oral History Project at Columbia in 1948 and later the Oral History Association. He also helped inaugurate "American Heritage."

#### Roy F. Nichols (1896-1973)

An expert on 19th century American political history, Nichols examined the disintegration of the Democratic party during the 1850s and similar events in their cultural contexts by including social sciences (psychology, natural sciences) in his research. A student of Dunning, he worked under him at Columbia. Using elements from the social sciences, his 1948 "The Disruption of American Democracy" describes 5 cultural influences that contributed to agitation (New Englandism, Southernism, metropolitanism, territorialism, and antislaveryism). To get beyond the excessive nationalism that defined American historical writing since Bancroft's day, Nichols concentrated on links between America and other nations (i.e., European roots of American institutions) rather than describing American exceptionalism. He also advocated state and local history, but he criticized the division of American history into short or thematic periods and disliked the increasing trend of specialization in the profession.

(when colleagues become so compartmentalized that they cannot synthesize or see broader relationships.

#### Reinhold Niebuhr (1892-1971)

Though attracted to Marxism after the 1929 crash, Niebuhr became critical of the flaws inherent to Communism. He extended this criticism to liberal social planners (read: progressives) as well as conservative free market theoreticians; "progress" in history, even if offering promise, still creates new evils. Niebuhr influenced postwar intellectuals with a realist philosophy that seemed to attractive to Schlesinger (Jr.) and George Kennan. He searched for ironies in American history.

#### David Morris Potter (1910-1971)

A Southerner by birth, Potter added to the historiography of the Civil War from his post at Yale. Favorite themes included America's natural character, and the relationship between history and social sciences, and economic abundance. "The Impending Crisis: 1848-1861" offered a subtle and discriminating analysis of the issues at hand. He lacked rigid ideological commitments. In "The Impending Crisis," Potter analyzed the alternatives available to Americans between 1848 and 1861; he does not believe hindsight proves that past activities became inevitable.

### Part VI: New Social History, the New Left, and Beyond

#### General Trends

By the late 1950s, scholars began to take issue with the consensus interpretation of American history. The New Left historians challenged both conservative interpretations (the rise of great institutions) and liberals who had supported the political endeavors of so-called "sell-outs" in the Democratic party. New Left historians sought to dismantle institutions (Katz's de-schooling of society) and challenged earlier interpretations as American ascendancy as a self-fulfilling mythology. The Vietnam War, civil rights struggles, and growth of a counterculture provided energy to New Left scholars. Just as they challenged previous schools of historiographic thought, a new breed of historians entered the profession in the late 1970s who sought to correct New Left excesses (Collier and Horowitz's "Destructive Generation"). Recent historiography transcend traditional social, political, and economic topics. New sub-fields often have similarities with other branches of the social sciences (i.e., in many cases gay and lesbian history closely resembles queer studies in sociology). Nearby (local and regional) history attempts to "ask the big questions in small places," avoiding antiquarianism and testing broad statements made by previous scholars.

#### Marxist History

With roots dating to the 19th century, Marxist history has 2 central aspects: attachment to a class struggle and belief that

society's legal and political institutions are molded by economic developments and a class struggle. Marx himself referred to it as the "materialist conception of history," where history changes as economic developments occur and classes struggle. Eugene Genovese represents a recent Marxist historian.

### Economic and Business History

Economic history grew roots as a separate discipline in the 19th century. The field developed rapidly after World War II in conjunction with developments in the social sciences. Business history first gained prominence in the 1920s with creation of Harvard's Graduate School of Business Administration. A distinct sub-field of advertising history appeared in the 1970s, that sought to show interconnections between agencies, people, corporations, and markets. It includes the sub-field of political advertising. In the US, agrarian history grew alongside the development of economic history, though it has often been subsumed as a part of the history of slavery, ecology, or the frontier.

### Cliometrics

This form of interdisciplinary history emerged by the late 1950s and early 1960s, with the advent of computer technology. Cliometricians often teach economic history within economic departments. With computer advances, this discipline has extended into demographics, political, family, medical, and social history.

Tools of cliometrics fall into 2 broad categories:

- Quantitative methods: derived from econometrics and social science statistics, this approach allows for hypothesis testing to distinguish between the possible and the probable

- Explicit theory: allocation of resources (e.g., price theory)

### Demography, Urbanization, and History

Demographic history is a recent phenomenon that grew out of quantitative revolution in scholarship. Closely related to social, economic, and family history, it relies heavily on statistical materials and quantifiable data. Urban history became more prominent by the 1950s in America. Its roots, however, went back earlier, at least to the Chicago School of Urban Sociologists (1920s) that examined the ecological nature of the city. Oscar Handlin wrote heavily on social and demographic processes of urbanization.

### Perry Anderson

Anderson became editor of the "New Left Review" in 1962. He is generally a Europeanist, who fully understands Marxist synthesis.

### Philip D. Curtin

An originator of Africanist scholarship in the US, Curtin has examined the slave trade through comparatist studies.

### Merle Curti (1897- )

Curti worked within the framework created by progressive

historians. He has preserved their syntheses and passed them on to the post-World War II generation. His commitment to placing ordinary Americans in his narratives makes him the father of both the American Studies movement and "new social history." He spent most of his career at Wisconsin.

In his work, Curti examines the relationship of ideas to social action. Sympathetic to reform movements, he regarded anti-war beliefs as self-evident truths. His "Social Ideas of American Educators" attacked the self-congratulatory tradition found in American educational historiography at the time: schoolmen were servants of the established order, not strengtheners of democracy. His "Growth of American Thought" was criticized by conservatives such as Morison, as a relativist progressivist work.

#### Stanley M. Elkins (1925- )

In his writings on slavery, Elkins challenged existing interpretations by asking new questions with a psychological foundation. He compared slaves with concentration camp victims in Nazi Germany, a portrayal that denies slaves the ability to make individual decisions within an unjust and punitive system.

#### Robert Fogel and Stanley Engerman

The chief exponent of cliometrics, Fogel recasted the approach towards economic history. Fogel's "American Railroads," based upon a hypothetical world, claimed that railroads in actuality contributed little to our history. Although this work has not stood the test of time, it has sparked other cliometric and econometric studies, including his collaborative effort with Engerman, "Time on the Cross."

#### Shelby Foote (1916- )

Foote's "The Civil War: A Narrative" is chiefly a military narrative that sweeps the reader into the events. His work, history as literature rather than as social science, coincided in timing with the civil rights movement, at a time of neoabolitionist interpretation of Southern motives.

#### Eugene Genovese (1930- )

A prominent Marxist historian heavily influenced by Antonio Gramsci, Genovese has written extensively on US slavery. He insists that the socialist historian must do his political and public duty through his work, though he later argued that being a historian alone is a full-time commitment, and activism must take a subordinate role. He became controversial in mid-1960s during his teaching years at Rutgers, when he demonstrated that his Marxist allegiance was more than academic (he "welcomed" a Viet Cong victory). His departure from Rutgers demonstrates his conviction as a Marxist; however his greater dedication to scholarship at a time when Marxist doctrine seemed in ascendant was viewed by those on the far Left as a sellout. But his interests were in analysis instead of polemic. "The Political Economy of Slavery" amasses 10 Marxist essays on life in the Old South: To him, slave labor damaged the Southern economy. Slavery should be regarded as a class, and not a race, question.

Herbert Gutman (1928-1985)

Gutman helped to redraw social history through his studies of ordinary working people (immigrants, workers, and slaves) in 19th century America. He criticized "Time on the Cross" and Fogel and Engerman's methodology, claiming that they asked the same questions as U.B. Phillips. Gutman viewed history as a communal enterprise, and he considered quantification a useful method for the social historian. He saw himself as an author of new labor history that would modify earlier works by Old Leftists.

Alan John Percivale (A.J.P.) Taylor (1906- )

With most of his works covering diplomatic and European history, Taylor was a nonconformist. His "Origins of the Second World War" challenged entrenched orthodoxies about the 1930s just as Cold War mythology started to crumble in the west.

William Appleman Williams (1921- )

A New Left historian, Williams emphasizes the importance of "open door imperialism." Williams saw the tragedy in American diplomacy as a contradiction between ideals of social change and the way policy makers placed turned these ideals into actions. Many of his students formed the Wisconsin School.

Comer Vann Woodward (1908- )

Woodward spent much of his career at Southern universities, before jumping to JHU and Yale. A leading figure among Southern liberals, he rewrote much of the region's postbellum history by liberating it from the dogmatic insistence on Southern solidarity. His view of history remains largely pessimistic, emphasizing irony and paradox. He saw a relationship between life and the craft of history, and hoped readers would use the past to learn about the present. He questioned the prevailing view of a "solid South" and a regional economic recovery in two 1950s works, "Origins of the New South, 1877-1913" and "Reunion and Reaction: The Compromise of 1877 and the End of Reconstruction." His "Strange Career of Jim Crow" (1955) had immediate impact by showing advocates of the civil rights movement that the de jure system of racial discrimination emerged as policy in the 1890s and evolved into the 20th century rather than just appearing after Reconstruction had ended. Since poll taxes and other measures used to exclude blacks often affected poor whites as well, Woodward argues that white supremacy united the solid South: romanticization with the Lost Cause was replaced with the stench of supremacist demagoguery. He believed American historians must reinterpret past history to allow present policymakers to understand their anachronistic assumptions.